

ABSTRACT

A system of and method for communicating control information between two or more entities over one or more backplane connections is described. The control information is stored in a layer of the packet above the physical layer and the packet is then communicated over the one or more backplane connections. A system of and method for performing load balancing over one or more backplane connections is also described. Control information for a packet is mapped into one or more identifiers of one or more of a plurality of backplane connections, and the packet is then communicated over the one or more identified backplane connections. A system of and method for extending the number of ports of a switch is further described. A first switch coupled to a second switch and having a greater number of ports than the second switch is provided. An identifier of a port of the first switch is stored in a layer of the packet above the physical layer. The packet is then communicated between the first and second switches.